ONISHING STORIES OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Astonishing

OCT.
NO. 6
10¢

IY COFFIN IS WAITING!

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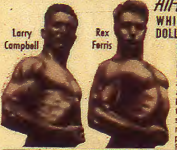
to become an "All-Around" HE-MAN at Home?



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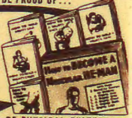

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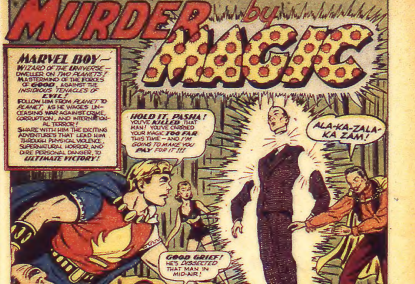
MURDER by MAGIC

MARVEL BOY—WIZARD OF THE UNIVERSE—ENGLED ON TWO PLANETS IN MASTERMIND OF THE FORCES OF **GOOD**, AGAINST THE INSIDIOUS TENACLES OF **EVIL**!

FOLLOW HIM FROM PLANET TO PLANET, AS HE WINGS UNCEASING WAR AGAINST CRIME, CORRUPTION, AND WITCHCRAFT—THROUGHOUT SPACE!

SHARE WITH HIM THE EXCITING ADVENTURES THAT LEAD HIM THROUGH MYSTERY, HORROR, AND SUPERNATURAL TERROR, AND GAIN RESOUNDING SATISFACTION IN HIS **ULTIMATE VICTORY!**


HOLD IT, PASHA! YOU'VE KILLED THAT MAN! YOU'VE LOOSED YOUR MAGIC TOO FAR AND IT'S GOING TO BRING DOWN ALL THE EVIL FOR IT!—YOU FOOL!
ALA-KA-ZALA-KA ZAM!
GOOD GRIEF! A DOORWAY THAT MAN IN MID-AIR!

IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE PLANET **URSAMEE**, SEVENTH MAJOR PLANET IN THE ORDER OF DISTANCE FROM THE SUN, THERE IS A UNIVERSALLY RENOWNED SCIENTIFIC LABORATORY, FOUNDED AND MANNED BY THE ANCIENT AND HONORED **MATTHEW GRAYSON, A** SELF-EXILED CITIZEN OF THE PLANET **EARTH**—AND IN THIS LABORATORY—

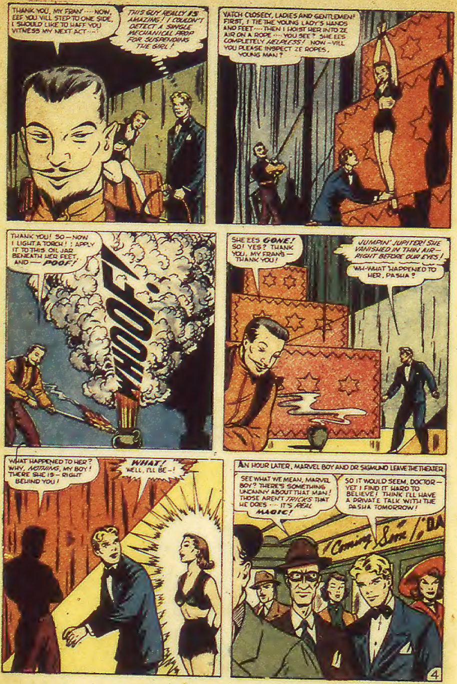
BOB, MY SON, I'VE BEEN RECEIVING SOME INTERESTING REPORTS FROM MY FELLOW SCIENTISTS ON EARTH—REPORTS THAT PUZZLE ME GREATLY—
TELL ME ABOUT THEM, DAD!

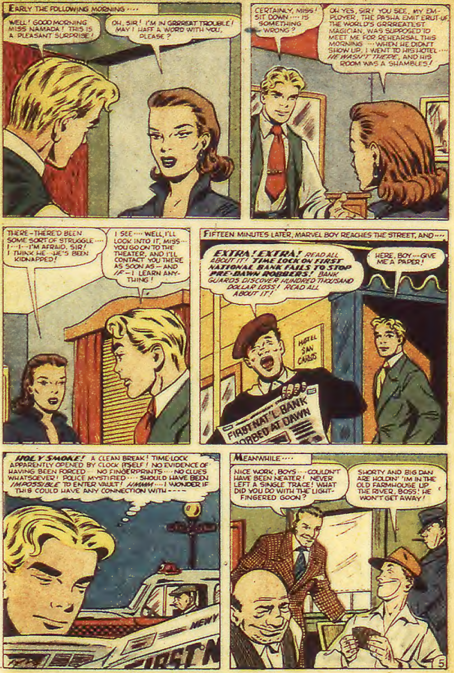
IT SEEMS THAT A VERY STRANGE AND WONDERFUL YOUNG MAGICIAN HAS APPEARED ON THE AMERICAN THEATRICAL SCENE—A PERFORMER WHOSE FEATS OF MAGIC HAVE COMPLETELY BAFFLED HIS AUDIENCES, AND APPARENTLY THERE IS ABSOLUTELY **NO** EXPLANATION FOR THEM! SO, IN VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I WANT YOU, AS THE **MARVEL BOY** OF THE UNIVERSE, TO GO TO EARTH AND INVESTIGATE HIS METHODS!

ALL NAMES AND PLACES IN THESE TRUE-TO-LIFE STORIES ARE FICTITIOUS
ANY SIMILARITY BETWEEN ACTUAL PERSONS OR PLACES AND THOSE USED IN THESE STORIES IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL

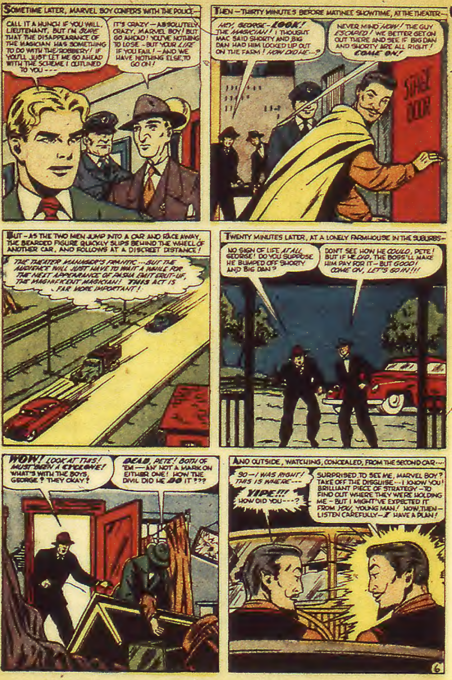
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, SON ···· YOU'RE WONDERING JUST WHAT YOU CAN DO, WHEN YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THIS SO-CALLED "MAGIC" ···· BUT REMEMBER, YOU HAVE AN I.Q. THAT'S FABULOUSLY HIGHER THAN ANY EARTHLING'S — INCLUDING ANY OF THEIR MOST BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS! SO I'M COUNTING ON THIS INTELLIGENCE OF YOURS TO SEE THROUGH THE MAGICIAN'S TRICKS, AND DISCOVER A LOGICAL EXPLANATION OF THEM, FOR THE BENEFIT OF UNIVERSAL SCIENCE!!!
I UNDERSTAND, DAD ···· I'LL LEAVE IN THE MORNING; AND I'LL DO THE BEST I CAN FOR YOU!
GOOD BOY, BOB! GO DIRECTLY TO NEW YORK, AND CONTACT PROFESSOR SIMON SIGMUND AS SOON AS YOU GET THERE!
AND MANY MILLIONS OF LIGHT-YEARS (SPACE MILES) LATER, ROARS IN FOR A LANDING AT A SPECIAL ROCKET SHIP BASE OUTSIDE NEW YORK CITY ····
WELL, WELL, WELL! THE KID GENIUS HIMSELF! HYAH, MARVEL BOY! WHAT BRINGS YOU BACK TO OUR DECADENT, PREHISTORIC WORLD THIS TIME?
HELLO, JOE ···· NOTHING MUCH THIS TIME — NOTHING IMPORTANT, ANYWAY! SERVICE THE "BULLET" FOR ME, WILL YOU, PLEASE? I'LL NEED IT AGAIN IN A COUPLE OF DAYS ····
WITHIN A FEW HOURS, HE RECEIVES A VISITOR AT HIS HOTEL ····
GOOD TO SEE YOU, DR. SIGMUND! YOU DIDN'T WASTE ANY TIME GETTING HERE!
LEFT THE LAB SOON AS YOU PHONED, MARVEL BOY ···· WANT TO GET RIGHT DOWN TO BUSINESS! WE CAN JUST MAKE THE FIRST SHOW IF WE HURRY!
WANT YOU TO SEE THIS MAN'S WORK YOURSELF ···· IT'S ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE!
JUST WHO IS HE, DOCTOR?
PASHA EMIT

NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY, MARVEL BOY .... HE'S A FOREIGNOR – SPEAKS WITH AN ACCENT I CAN'T IDENTIFY – VERY MYSTERIOUS! RETICENT ABOUT HIMSELF .... CAN'T LEARN ANYTHING ABOUT HIM FROM HIS ASSISTANT, EITHER — LOVELY YOUNG GIRL, CALLS HERSELF *EVE NAMADA* .... *OH-OH! SHHH!* HERE COMES THE STAGE SHOW!
GOOD EVENING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! ONCE AGAIN THE MANAGEMENT TAKES GREAT PLEASURE IN PRESENTING, FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT, THE ASTONISHING – THE AMAZING – THE SPECTACULAR AND UNCANNY FEATS OF *THE GREATEST MAGICIAN OF ALL TIME!* WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE NOW IN INTRODUCING THE *ONE AND ONLY* – THE *INCREDIBLE* – **PASHA EMIT ERUT-UF!**
'ALLO AGAIN, GOOT FRAN'S! EEF YOU VILL BE KIND ENOUGH TO GEEF ME YOUR UNDEVIDED ATTEN-CION, I VILL OPEN MY PROGRAM VITH AN ATTEMPT TO PERFORM ZE EVER MYSTIFYING ACT OF *LEVITATION!* NOW – I ASK MY ASSISTANT, MISS EVE NAMADA, TO LIE ON HER BACK ON THEES TABLE – *SO!* THEN, I RAISE MY HANDS, AND — *WATCH CLOSELY!* – *THE YOUNG LADY* **FLOATS IN THE AIR!**
OH!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
MANY MAGICIANS HAVE PERFORMED THEE'S ACT BY USING WIRES, AND MIRRORS TO CONCEAL ZEM .... BUT I INTEND TO *PROVE* TO YOU THAT *THEES* YOUNG LADY EES *ACTUALLY FLOATING FREELY!* NOW, EEF SOMEONE FROM ZE AUDIENCE VILL KINDLY STEP UP TO ZE STAGE .... ?
MAY I ... ?
WHY – CERTAINLY, YOUNG MAN! NOW, EEF YOU VILL CAREFULLY EXAMINE THEES METAL HOOP, AND THEN PASS EET OVER THE YOUNG LADY'S BODY ...? *SO!* YOU SEE? *NOTHING IS HOLDING HER UP!!!*
HMMM! MOST INTERESTING! I FIND NO EVIDENCE OF TRICKERY!
3


THANK YOU, MY FRAN' .... NOW, EEF YOU VILL STEP TO ONE SIDE, I SHOULD LIKE TO HAFE YOU VITNESS MY NEXT ACT ....!
THIS GUY REALLY IS AMAZING! I COULDN'T DETECT A SINGLE MECHANICAL PROP FOR SUSPENDING THE GIRL!
VATCH CLOSELY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! FIRST, I TIE THE YOUNG LADY'S HANDS AND FEET .... THEN I HOIST HER INTO ZE AIR ON A ROPE .... YOU SEE? SHE EES COMPLETELY HELPLESS! NOW —VILL YOU PLEASE INSPECT ZE ROPES, YOUNG MAN?
THANK YOU! SO—NOW I LIGHT A TORCH! I APPLY IT TO THIS OIL JAR BENEATH HER FEET, AND— POOF!
WHOOF!
SHE EES GONE! SO! YES? THANK YOU, MY FRAN'S— THANK YOU!
JUMPIN' JUPITER! SHE VANISHED IN THIN AIR— RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!
WH-WHAT HAPPENED TO HER, PASHA?
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER? WHY, NOTHING, MY BOY! THERE SHE IS— RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
WHAT! WELL, I'LL BE—!
AN HOUR LATER, MARVEL BOY AND DR SIGMUND LEAVE THE THEATER
SEE WHAT WE MEAN, MARVEL BOY? THERE'S SOMETHING UNCANNY ABOUT THAT MAN! THOSE AREN'T TRICKS THAT HE DOES ... IT'S REAL MAGIC!
SO IT WOULD SEEM, DOCTOR— YET I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE! THINK I'LL HAVE A PRIVATE TALK WITH THE PASHA TOMORROW!
"Coming Soon!" "DA
4



EARLY THE FOLLOWING MORNING ....
WELL! GOOD MORNING MISS NAMADA! THIS IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE!
OH, SIR! I'M IN GRRREAT TROUBLE! MAY I HAFF A WORD WITH YOU, PLEASE?
CERTAINLY, MISS! SIT DOWN .... IS SOMETHING WRONG?
OH YES, SIR! YOU SEE, MY EMPLOYER, THE PASHA EMIT ERUT, THE WORLD'S GRRREATEST MAGICIAN, WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET ME FOR REHEARSAL THIS MORNING ... WHEN HE DIDN'T SHOW UP, I WENT TO HIS HOTEL ... HE WASN'T THERE, AND HIS ROOM WAS A SHAMBLES!
THERE - THERE'D BEEN SOME SORT OF STRUGGLE .... I ... I ... I'M AFRAID, SIR! I THINK HE ... HE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED!
I SEE .... WELL, I'LL LOOK INTO IT, MISS ... YOU GO ON TO THE THEATER, AND I'LL CONTACT YOU THERE AS SOON AS — AND IF — I LEARN ANYTHING!
FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, MARVEL BOY REACHES THE STREET, AND ....
EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! TIME LOCK ON FIRST NATIONAL BANK FAILS TO STOP PRE-DAWN ROBBERS! BANK GUARDS DISCOVER HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR LOSS! READ ALL ABOUT IT!
HERE, BOY ... GIVE ME A PAPER!
HOTEL SAN CARLOS
FIRST NAT'L BANK ROBBED AT DAWN
HOLY SMOKE! A CLEAN BREAK! TIME-LOCK APPARENTLY OPENED BY CLOCK ITSELF! NO EVIDENCE OF HAVING BEEN FORCED ... NO FINGERPRINTS .... NO CLUES WHATSOEVER! POLICE MYSTIFIED .... SHOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO ENTER VAULT! HMMM .... I WONDER IF THIS COULD HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH ----
MEANWHILE ....
NICE WORK, BOYS ... COULDN'T HAVE BEEN NEATER! NEVER LEFT A SINGLE TRACE! WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE LIGHT-FINGERED GOON?
SHORTY AND BIG DAN ARE HOLDIN' 'IM IN THE OLD FARMHOUSE UP THE RIVER, BOSS! HE WON'T GET AWAY!


SOMETIME LATER, MARVEL BOY CONFERS WITH THE POLICE–
CALL IT A HUNCH IF YOU WILL, LIEUTENANT, BUT I'M SURE THAT THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE MAGICIAN HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE ROBBERY! IF YOU'LL JUST LET ME GO AHEAD WITH THE SCHEME I OUTLINED TO YOU---
IT'S CRAZY — ABSOLUTELY CRAZY, MARVEL BOY! BUT GO AHEAD! YOU'VE NOTHING TO LOSE - BUT YOUR LIFE IF YOU FAIL! — AND WE HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO GO ON!
THEN — THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE MATINEE SHOWTIME, AT THE THEATER–
HEY, GEORGE–LOOK! THE MAGICIAN! I THOUGHT MAC SAID SHORTY AND BIG DAN HAD HIM LOCKED UP OUT ON THE FARM! HOW DID HE--?
NEVER MIND HOW! THE GUY ESCAPED! WE BETTER GET ON OUT THERE AND SEE IF BIG DAN AND SHORTY ARE ALL RIGHT! COME ON!
BUT - AS THE TWO MEN JUMP INTO A CAR AND RACE AWAY, THE BEARDED FIGURE QUICKLY SLIPS BEHIND THE WHEEL OF ANOTHER CAR, AND FOLLOWS AT A DISCREET DISTANCE!
THE THEATER MANAGER'S FRANTIC --- BUT THE AUDIENCE WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT A WHILE FOR THE NEXT APPEARANCE OF PASHA EMIT SRUT-UF, THE MAGNIFICENT MAGICIAN! THIS ACT IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT!
TWENTY MINUTES LATER, AT A LONELY FARMHOUSE IN THE SUBURBS–
NO SIGN OF LIFE AT ALL, GEORGE! DO YOU SUPPOSE HE BUMPED OFF SHORTY AND BIG DAN?
DON'T SEE HOW HE COULD, PETE! BUT IF HE DID, THE BOSS'LL MAKE HIM PAY FOR IT — BUT GOOD! COME ON, LET'S GO IN!!!
WOW! LOOK AT THIS! MUST'VE BEEN A CYCLONE! WHAT'S WITH THE BOYS, GEORGE? THEY OKAY?
DEAD, PETE! BOTH OF 'EM — AN' NOT A MARK ON EITHER ONE! HOW THE DIVIL DID HE DO IT???
AND OUTSIDE, WATCHING, CONCEALED, FROM THE SECOND CAR---
SO — I WAS RIGHT! THIS IS WHERE---
YIPE!!! HOW DID YOU---?
SURPRISED TO SEE ME, MARVEL BOY? TAKE OFF THE DISGUISE --- I KNOW YOU! BRILLIANT PIECE OF STRATEGY — TO FIND OUT WHERE THEY WERE HOLDING ME — BUT I MIGHT'VE EXPECTED IT FROM YOU, YOUNG MAN! NOW, THEN — LISTEN CAREFULLY — I HAVE A PLAN!
6

AN HOUR LATER, IN TIME FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED PERFORMANCE OF THE GREAT MAGICIAN ....
THE GUY GOT AWAY SO HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO MISS HIS ACT! HE'LL BE HERE ALL RIGHT! REMEMBER THE PLAN, NOW --- WE SCATTER THROUGH-OUT THE AUDIENCE, AND WHEN THE GINK SETS OFF THE EXPLOSION THAT MAKES THE DAME DISAPPEAR, WE ALL OPEN UP ON HIM! THE AUDIENCE WILL BE SO RATTLED WE CAN GET AWAY BEFORE THEY EVEN REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENED! ALL SET NOW? LET'S GO!
Pasha EMIT
THE CURTAIN GOES UP .... AND, IN THE SPOTLIGHT ....
AH - GOOD AFTERNOON, MY FRAN'S! TODAY I HAFF ARRANGED A VERY SPECIAL TREAT FOR YOU! SOMETHING NEVER BEFORE ATTEMPTED BY ANY MAGICIAN ANYWHERE! THIS EES IN THE FORM OF MASS LEVITATION - WITH A NEW TWIST! I'VE SELECTED SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE, WHO-- BUT HOLD! LET THEM BE SURPRISED! WATCH CLOSELY, NOW!
ALA-KA-ZALA-KA-ZAM!!! ARISE, SCOUNDRELS!
LOOK!
GOOD GRIEF! YOU'VE DECAPITATED THEM, PASHA! ARE-- ARE THEY DEAD?
I WOULDN'T BE AT ALL SUR-PRISED, MARVEL BOY! BUT I SHALL PUT THEM TOGETHER AGAIN, AND LET THEM FALL HERE ON THE STAGE --- AND THEN WE SHALL SEE!!!
THEY'RE DEAD - ALL OF THEM!!! B-BUT THERE'S NO BLOOD!
NO .... I DON'T LIKE MESSY EXECUTIONS! EVEN WHEN THE VICTIMS ARE MURDEROUS CROOKS!
NICE RETRIBUTION, PASHA! BUT, YOU KNOW -- THIS IS MURDER! AND, IN THE EYES OF THE LAW -- AND AT LEAST A THOUSAND WITNESSES -- YOU ARE GUILTY!

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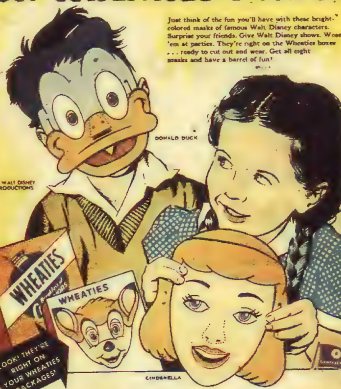

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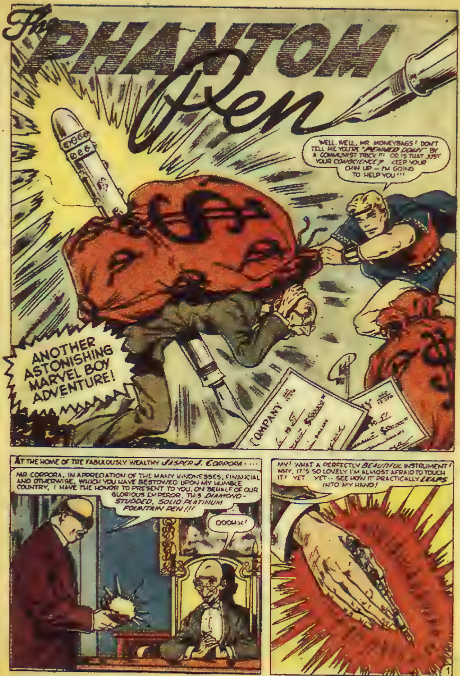
The PHANTOM Pen
WELL, WELL, MR MONEYBAGS! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE "PENNED DOWN" BY A COMMUNIST TRICK?!! OR IS THAT JUST YOUR CONSCIENCE? KEEP YOUR CHIN UP — I'M GOING TO HELP YOU!!!
ANOTHER ASTONISHING MARVEL BOY ADVENTURE!
COMPANY
AT THE HOME OF THE FABULOUSLY WEALTHY JASPER J. CORPORA....
MR CORPORA, IN APPRECIATION OF THE MANY KINDNESSES, FINANCIAL AND OTHERWISE, WHICH YOU HAVE BESTOWED UPON MY HUMBLE COUNTRY, I HAVE THE HONOR TO PRESENT TO YOU, ON BEHALF OF OUR GLORIOUS EMPEROR, THIS DIAMOND-STUDDED, SOLID PLATINUM FOUNTAIN PEN!!!
OOOHH!
MY! WHAT A PERFECTLY BEAUTIFUL INSTRUMENT! WHY, IT'S SO LOVELY I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO TOUCH IT! YET YET.. SEE HOW IT PRACTICALLY LEAPS INTO MY HAND!
1

HIS VISITOR HAVING DEPARTED, THE RETIRED MULTI-MILLIONAIRE FINANCIER CONTINUES TO ADMIRE THE PRICELESS GIFT WITH AWE–
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT! IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL IT FAIRLY COMPELS ONE TO WRITE! WHY---WHY, I AM WRITING! I'M WRITING A CHECK! A CHECK- TO THE UPPER STALINIAN GOVERNMENT! A CHECK FOR FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS!
MOMENTS LATER····
I---I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! I SIGNED THE CHECK, ADDRESSED AN ENVELOPE, AND NOW I'M MAILING IT!!!
AND THE FOLLOWING DAY····
ANOTHER ONE! TWO CHECKS IN TWO DAYS TOTALLING A MILLION DOLLARS! AND I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO HELP MYSELF! I KEEP TAKING THE PEN OUT TO LOOK AT IT, AND PRETTY SOON I FIND MYSELF WRITING A CHECK TO THE FINANCIAL MINISTER OF UPPER STALINIA!
CORPORA NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY
GOTHAM CITY, N.Y.
AT THE END OF A WEEK, JASPER CORPORA BECOMES FRANTIC!
TWO-AND-A-HALF MILLION! I JUST CAN'T STAND THIS! IT---IT'S UNCANNY! I TOLD THE UPPER STALINIAN TREASURY I WOULD GIVE THEM NO MORE MONEY, YET HERE I AM STILL HANDING THEM MILLIONS OF DOLLARS! AND IT'S BREAKING ME!
ASSETS
ON MONDAY, DESPERATE, HE VISITS BOB GRAYSON, INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR·····
.. AND SO, MR GRAYSON, I'VE COME TO YOU FOR ADVICE! I'M AFRAID THAT THE POLICE WOULD BE OF NO HELP IN A CASE LIKE THIS .. BUT I KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE FAMOUS MARVEX BOY, AND I HOPED ----
YES, I SEE ... THIS IS A STRANGE STORY, SIR! MAY I HAVE A LOOK AT THE PEN, PLEASE ?
WHY, CERTAINLY -- HERE! BEAUTIFUL THING, ISN'T IT ? JUST HOLD IT IN YOUR--- OOOPS!
HEY! IT JUMPED STRAIGHT UP IN THE AIR!
2

WHAT IN THE NAME OF SATURN'S THE MATTER WITH THAT THING? I CAN'T GET HOLD OF IT! LOOK - EVERY TIME I REACH FOR IT, IT JUMPS AWAY FROM ME!!!
IT -- IT MUST BE POSSESSED MARVT, BOY! HERE, LET ME
WHY - IT FLEW RIGHT INTO MY POCKET! WH-WHAT KIND OF BLACK MAGIC IS THIS, MARVI, BOY? I'M FRIGHTENED!!!
IT'S UNBELIEVABLY WEIRD!!!
SEVERAL HOURS LATER, AT THE EMBASSY
LOOK, GRAYSON -- I DON'T LIKE YOUR INFERENCE! I DON'T KNOW WHY MR. CORRORA CONTINUES TO SEND US THESE CHECKS, BUT THEY'RE PERFECTLY LEGAL AND I ASSURE YOU I HAD NOTHING TO
I DOUBT THAT, BUT -- LET ME HAVE A LOOK AT THEM, PLEASE!
NO! DO YOU THINK I TRUST YOU? KEEP YOUR HANDS ---
LOOK OUT! YOU CLUMSY FOOL! YOU FLICKED THE SWITCH OF MY LIGHT JEWEL!
WH-WHAT ---? GOOD HEAVENS! ALL THE WRITING ON THE CHECKS HAS DISAPPEARED! IT WAS THAT LIGHT! YOU DID IT ON PURPOSE YOU -- YOU ---!!!
3

WHY — I'LL BLAST YOU TO BITS, YOU MEDDLING YOUNG INTERLOPER! I'LL — EEEOW!
NOT SO FAST, MY FRIEND! YOUR SUNGLASSES WON'T PROTECT YOUR EYES AGAINST THIS LIGHT WHEN IT'S TURNED ON FULL FORCE!
TURN IT OFF! TURN IT OFF! — OKAY! YOU'VE GOT MY GUN! AND YOU'VE RUINED THESE CHECKS, BUT IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD MR. MARVEL BOY! EVEN NOW JASPER J. CORPORA IS WRITING MORE CHECKS FOR MY GOVERNMENT — AND YOU CAN'T STOP HIM!!!
OH, I CAN'T, CAN'T I? THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK "COMRADE"! FOR A COMMUNIST, YOU'RE ONE OF THE MOST AVARICIOUS CAPITALISTS I'VE EVER SEEN! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU LATER!
THIS I NEVER COULD UNDERSTAND! COMMIES — CHAMPIONS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE, HEROES OF THE "DOWNTRODDEN MASSES", DEGRADERS OF INDIVIDUALISM, INCENTIVE, AND WEALTH, SCORNING ALL MANNER OF WORLDLY RICHES — YET WEARING THE FINEST CLOTHING, RIDING IN THE SLEEKEST LIMOUSINES, EATING THE GRANDEST FOOD, LIVING IN THE MOST EXPENSIVE HOTELS, AND AMASSING GREAT SUMS OF UNITED STATES CURRENCY BY FAIR MEANS OR FOUL! WHAT HYPOCRISY!!! I DON'T GET IT! BUT THEN — OH WELL! I'D BETTER FIND OUT WHAT JASPER J. CORPORA IS UP TO!
WELL, WELL, WELL! IF IT ISN'T THE PLANET URANUS' GOLDEN GIFT TO THE UNIVERSE! STEP RIGHT IN AND JOIN THE PARTY MARVEL BOY — BUT KEEP YOUR HANDS UP!!!
"HAPPY" BRONKHORST! I'D HEARD YOU'D JOINED THE REDS, BUT I DIDN'T BELIEVE JOE STALIN HAD SUNK SO LOW HE HAD TO USE SNAKES TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
VERY FUNNY, BRIGHT BOY! UNCLE JASPER, HERE, IS JUST PUTTING HIS "JOHN HANCOCK" ON A FEW LITTLE CHECKS FOR US — AFTER WHICH HE IS GOING TO GO FOR A SWIM — IN A CONCRETE SWIMMING SUIT!!!
I — I DID WHAT YOU SAID, MARVEL BOY! I LOCKED MYSELF IN THE HOUSE, AND I TRIED TO DESTROY THE PEN — BUT SOMETHING FASCINATED ME! I COULDN'T DO IT! THEN THESE MEN BROKE IN AND —
I KNOW — I KNOW! IT'S ALL RIGHT, MR CORPORA! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN THEY'D HAVE THEIR SPIES WATCHING YOU — AND ME!
HOW TRUE, MR MARVEL BOY! GOOD WORK, BRONKHORST — DID YOU TAKE MY GUN AWAY FROM HIM? AND THE LIGHT-JEWEL HE WEARS ON HIS WRIST?
4

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THE HILLS OF VENUS

MONONGAHELA MUNROE was the first man on Venus. He knew it. Back on Earth, the thundering crowds that had seen his ship off on its maiden flight, had known it. He could remember the weeping, waving girls; the strong, manly handclasps; the bunting and gay banners that surrounded ANDERSON. Field on that memorable day—two weeks ago—when *the Congressman Newton* took off for Venus. But if he was the first man on Venus, why was his left foot caught tightly and irremovably in a late nineteenth century beartrap?

Heat and pain crowded hallucinations into his brain. He could be crazy. It might be a delusion—and yet the pain was horribly real. He lifted his head and shielding his eyes from the burning sun, he looked back over the mountainous terrain he had traveled in the past five hours. He looked down at the trap again and let a sob escape from his lips. This was stupid. He—Monongahela Monroe, explorer extraordinary, adventure-scarred veteran of hundreds of treks into the interior of darkest Europa — caught in an ancient trap, and very obviously and amateurishly contrived and set at that.

But — who would have been on the lookout for it? He fumbled in his plastic jacket for a cigarette and groaned between clenched teeth at the throb of agony the movement had brought.

He had left his ship, blaster in one hand, and recording camera clicking away at his waist. Cautiously, he had picked his way through the purple, bloated, ankle-high grass, eyes peeled for signs of animal life. The purple plain had stretched endlessly into the horizon, its sameness broken only by clumps of five or six low-foliaged, twisted trees, and by low hills of rocks.

The hills were too evenly spaced to be natural, but the two or three he had taken apart revealed nothing but the solid heap of irregular, fist-sized boulders, piled as high as Monogahela's waist.

After five miles of nothing but purple grass, twisted trees and stone haystacks, he came upon the brook. By this time the quiet had begun to unnerve him, and he found himself increasingly worried about the mysterious mound builders. Who were they? Where were they?

It was when he'd dropped to the glass-clear brook that it had happened. The tiny aquatic animals, lashing heads on either ends had reminded him of the man-eating *piranhas* of darkest America, he'd smiled knowingly to himself. This was one chance that a novice might have taken, but he, of course, knew better. Oh yes! So he'd leaped the brook, and landed on the other side smack into a bear trap that sunk it's razor-sharp teeth into both his legs.

He could tell that his left leg was broken. His right leg? He wasn't sure. He coughed and flipped the cigarette into the brook. Before it reached the water one of the fish — he thought of them as fish—shot out and grabbed it in the mouth — one of its heads. Its torso twisted back in surprise — pain shooting up his thigh. But he blinked and looked again at what he saw then. The creature didn't fall back into the smooth mirrored surface of the brook. Instead eight other *fishes* lapped immediately into action, one beneath the other — like master jugglers—balancing the top one, who proceeded to blow smoke out of the other head.

Mouth open, Monongahela watched unbelievingly until, the cigarette had been smoked to a half-inch butt. Then the crazy pyramid dissolved into the water and only the smooth surface of the brook could be seen again.

Monongahela drew in a breath sharply and discovered to his surprise that he had sat down while the floor-show was on. The pain in his legs, momentarily forgotten, returned in a wave of anguish.

He fumbled in his plastic jacket and brought out a spray hypodermic. He depressed the plunger over his leg and sighed with relief as the hundred c.c.'s of pseudomorphine took hold. Thank the lord, at least he'd

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE...

SKINNY GIRLS ARE NOT GLAMOUR GIRLS!

HOW TO ADD Glamorous Curves TO YOUR FIGURE

...CONTINUED

come prepared for accidents!

All sensation gone from the hips down, he was able to concentrate on his problem. Should he try to free himself from the trap and attempt to drag himself over the five miles separating him from his ship? Would it be better to wait for the setters of the trap to find him? Obviously, they had not intended to catch a human—or had they? Could they have known he was coming?

Now he was being foolish. Even if they had, how would they know he would come in this direction and step in this particular spot? Perhaps they had traps placed in hundreds of other strategic places, and this just happened to be the first he'd blundered into. Still, it seemed odd that there were more logical ways of catching him, if that indeed had been the trapper's intention.

He bent forward awkwardly, dropping his blaster to his side and tried to pry the jaws of the trap apart. Five minutes of straining convinced him that it was beyond his strength — at least, under his present conditions.

He leaned back, grunting, and his right hand reached for the blaster. He groped blindly for a moment, then looked down, panic-stricken. The blaster was gone!

And in its place lay the water-soaked half-inch cigarette butt!

He shrank away from it and clawed at the trap again—this was indeed madness. He had to get away, to think these things out as clearly as possible.

He screamed out into the silence of the plains. "Who are you? What do you want with me?" The sound of his voice died with a frightening suddenness, and a fish leaped out of the water spitting an echo at him.

"Whoosyoo? Whdooyoouwishme?"

Hundreds of them leaped out of the water hooking themselves together by their hooked teeth like sections in a steel rod. They formed a shape that looked like the lone caricature of a man's

skeleton. A circle for a head, two swinging lashing arms, and trembling, swaying legs. The words came driving in spine-chilling harmony.

"Whoosyoo? Whdooyoouwishme?"

Suddenly the fish all dropped back into the water. He heard the sound of a deep roar in the sky above him. It looked like—it was—an Earth ship. The second ship of the convoy that was coming out to colonize Venus. He had to send an S.O.S. before they landed or they would never find him. There had to be some way to signal them. He couldn't think of a way, and finally it was too late. The ship downed rockets and he could tell that they had landed miles away from him. He was as good as dead now. He had almost decided that these fish-creatures who smoked cigarettes, and stole blasters, and echoed things he said, were the only creatures that lived on Venus. Perhaps many years ago another Earth-traveler had landed on this planet and left this trap in hopes of catching some animal for food. He had probably starved to death.

Suddenly it came to him. A way he could contact that Earth-ship. He called out in his weak voice. "Help!"

The fish leaped out of the brook and called, *"Hel-up! Other fish from other brooks took up the cry. "Hel-up! Help!* The sound was relayed down the strange-hills of Venus. He knew that it would get to the ship, and that they would know he was alive, and come for him. . . .

Three days later, he was starving and weak. He was about to give up all hope of being saved, when he heard footsteps behind him. He turned and saw three men dressed in Earth-clothing. Thank goodness he was saved. One of them stepped forward and smiled at him.

He said: "Mr. Monongahela Munroe, I presume.". . . .

THE END

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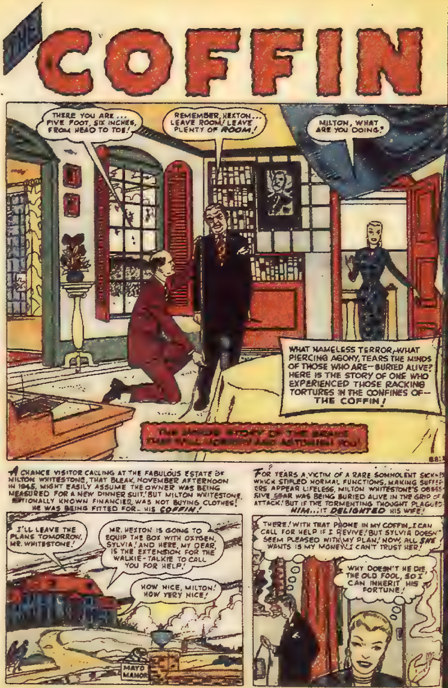

THE COFFIN
THERE YOU ARE... FIVE FOOT, SIX INCHES, FROM HEAD TO TOE!
REMEMBER, HEXTON... LEAVE ROOM! LEAVE PLENTY OF ROOM!
MILTON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WHAT NAMELESS TERROR, WHAT PIERCING AGONY, TEARS THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO ARE--BURIED ALIVE? HERE IS THE STORY OF ONE WHO EXPERIENCED THOSE RACKING TORTURES IN THE CONFINES OF-- THE COFFIN!
A CHANCE VISITOR CALLING AT THE FABULOUS ESTATE OF MILTON WHITESTONE, THAT BLEAK, NOVEMBER AFTERNOON IN 1945, MIGHT EASILY ASSUME THE OWNER WAS BEING MEASURED FOR A NEW DINNER SUIT! BUT MILTON WHITESTONE, NATIONALLY KNOWN FINANCIER, WAS NOT BUYING CLOTHES! HE WAS BEING FITTED FOR-- HIS COFFIN!
I'LL LEAVE THE PLANS TOMORROW, MR. WHITESTONE!
MR. HEXTON IS GOING TO EQUIP THE BOX WITH OXYGEN, SYLVIA! AND HERE, MY DEAR, IS THE EXTENSION FOR THE WALKIE-TALKIE TO CALL YOU FOR HELP!
HOW NICE, MILTON! HOW VERY NICE!
MAYO MANOR
FOR YEARS A VICTIM OF A RARE SOMNOLENT SICKNESS WHICH STIFLED NORMAL FUNCTIONS, MAKING SUFFERERS APPEAR LIFELESS, MILTON WHITESTONE'S OBSESSIVE FEAR WAS BEING BURIED ALIVE IN THE GRIP OF AN ATTACK! BUT IF THE TORMENTING THOUGHT PLAGUED HIM... IT DELIGHTED HIS WIFE!
THERE! WITH THAT PHONE IN MY COFFIN, I CAN CALL FOR HELP IF I REVIVE! BUT SYLVIA DOESN'T SEEM PLEASED WITH MY PLAN! NOW, ALL SHE WANTS IS MY MONEY! I CAN'T TRUST HER!
WHY DOESN'T HE DIE, THE OLD FOOL, SO I CAN INHERIT HIS FORTUNE!

THE FATES MIGHT HAVE HEARD SYLVIA WHITESTONE'S FERVENT PLEA! ONLY TWO WEEKS AFTER THE COMPLETION OF HIS UNIQUE VAULT, HER HUSBAND SUDDENLY COLLAPSED, AND HIS LIFELESS BODY WAS LOCKED INTO IT FOREVER!
REST HIS SOUL. AMEN!
DID YOU EVER SEE SO MANY FLOWERS?
A MAGNIFICENT FUNERAL!
LISTEN TO THEM! THE FOOLS! "BIGGEST FUNERAL THIS TOWN EVER SAW," THEY SAY! AND WHY NOT? I CAN AFFORD TO BE GENEROUS NOW THAT DEAR MILTON LEFT ME SO MUCH!
CEREMONIES OVER, SYLVIA INSTANTLY DISCARDED THE TRADITIONAL MOURNER'S GARB AND HER FACE TOOK ON A BRILLIANT, BROADENING SMILE --A SMILE RARELY SEEN ON GRIEF-STRICKEN WIDOW'S LIPS!
AT LAST! AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I'M FREE! FREE TO SPEND HIS MONEY, TRAVEL AS I LIKE! RICH AS A QUEEN! HA, HA! YES, RICH!
RING-G-G! RING-G-G!
INSTANTLY, JOYOUS EMOTION FLICKED TO INCREDULOUS HORROR! THE WALL EXTENSION PEALED A DESPERATE PLEA FROM THE COFFIN!
NO, NO...IT CAN'T BE! IT CAN'T BE! MILTON!... HE'S ALIVE! IT WAS ONLY A SOMNOLENT ATTACK! HE'S STILL ALIVE!
WELL IT WON'T BE FOR LONG! THIS TIME, I'LL MAKE SURE! HE'LL SUFFOCATE WHEN HIS OXYGEN RUNS OUT...AND NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW! GOOD-BYE, MILTON! I'M RID OF YOU... FOREVER!
MEANTIME IN THE COFFIN...
WH...? (CLICK!) OH, NO-- SHE COULDN'T! JUST AS I SUSPECTED! SYLVIA--S-SHE RIPPED OUT THE LINE! GOOD THING I PUT IN AN EMERGENCY PHONE, SHE DOESN'T KNOW OF!
DEXTER PECK, ATTORNEY AND LOYAL FRIEND, RECEIVED WHITESTONE'S FRANTIC SIGNAL AND RUSHED TO RESCUE HIM!
MILTON... THANK HEAVEN, I WAS IN TIME!
I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS, DEXTER! YOU SAVED MY LIFE! WE'LL HAVE THE GRAVE COVERED...THEN, WE HAVE WORK TO DO!
REVENGE...WAS MILTON'S ONLY THOUGHT, AFTER RECOVERING FROM HIS DEATH DEFYING EXPERIENCE!
NOW, NOW... TAKE IT EASY, MAN! YOU'VE HAD A HARROWING ESCAPE! YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER YOU GET SOME SLEEP!
SLEEP?" I'D HAVE SLEPT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU, DEXTER! SHE DID THIS TO ME! MY OWN WIFE... PLANNED TO MURDER ME! BUT SHE WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT! I'LL GIVE HER THE FRIGHT OF HER LIFE!

ALL SYLVIA WANTS IS MY MONEY! BUT I'D RATHER SHE'D HEARD HOW ON THE PHONE I'VE JUST 5 MINUTES AGO! I KNOW I SOUNDED CRAZY, BUT I CANNOT GO AROUND THINKING THAT! I'M CERTAIN! HE'S DEAD! I'VE EXHUMING HIS COFFIN TOMORROW!
I'M NOT SYLVIA, I TELL YA! I HEARD HOW I SOUNDED! I KNOW I SOUNDED CRAZY, BUT I CANNOT GO AROUND THINKING THAT! I'M CERTAIN! HE'S DEAD! I'VE EXHUMING HIS COFFIN TOMORROW!
DON'T BE SILLY DESTRE! MILTON WAS YOUR BEST FRIEND, BUT YOU'RE TAKING HIS DEATH TOO HARD! YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS!
SLEEPING AT DESTER PECK'S HOUSE, SYLVIA FIRST DISCOUNTED THEM WITH A BRIEF, DISMISSIVE DOWN BUT QUICKLY, GREW IN HER MIND.
HMMM, HOW COULD IT BE...? MILTON, STILL ALIVE? PERHAPS HE MIGHT STILL TO REACH... BUT WHY WOULD HE WALK? TALKING? BUT, BUT, BUT... IT COULDN'T BE SO WEAK... I COULD BE AN EASY MATTER BACK... YES, YES, I MUST GET TO THE COFFIN BEFORE DESTRE WILL! I WON'T BE CHEATED OUT OF MY...TOM'S FORTUNE, NOW!

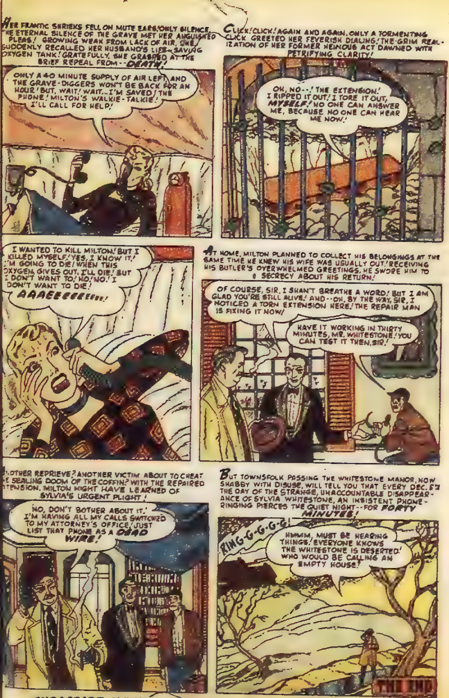
AS HER HUSBAND HAD CORRECTLY FORESEEN, SYLVIA'S CURIOSITY AND GREED DROVE HER TO HIS GRAVE.

ALL RIGHT, YOU CAN GO NOW! COME BACK IN AN HOUR AND I'LL HAVE GREAT AND REMEMBER...NOT A WORD TO ANYONE!
TRUST US, LADY! WE'LL BE BACK FOR A HUNDRED BUCKS. WE CAN BE AS MUM AS THE GUY DOWN THERE!

TO MAKE CERTAIN MILTON WHITESTONE WAS DEAD WAS SYLVIA'S ONLY PURPOSE. A PURPOSE ENTHUSIASTICALLY SHARED BY THE SHISTER OBJECT SHE HELD IN HER HANDS!

BLANKLY, SHE STARED AT THE OPEN COFFIN/WORDLESSLY, SHE SOUGHT TO GRASP HER SHOCKED ASTONISHMENT/ SO DAZED BY THE INCREDIBLE DISCOVERY THAT SHE DID NOT NOTICE AN OXYGEN LINE LOOPED OVER THE COFFIN RIM/

HEADLONG INTO THE COFFIN SYLVIA FELL! THE LID SLAMMED SHUT/ ANOTHER PRISONER IN THE SOMBER VAULT.



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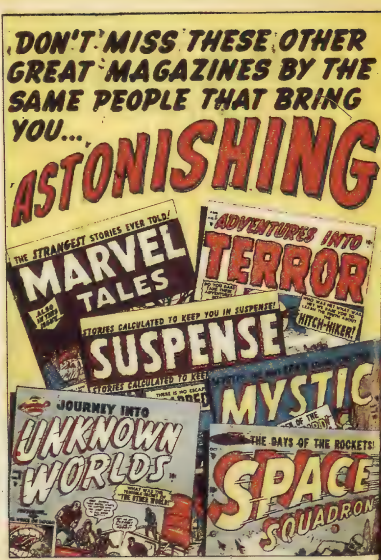
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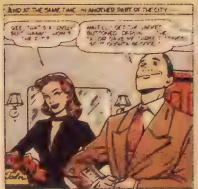
THE DAYS OF THE ROCKETS!
SPACE SQUADRON

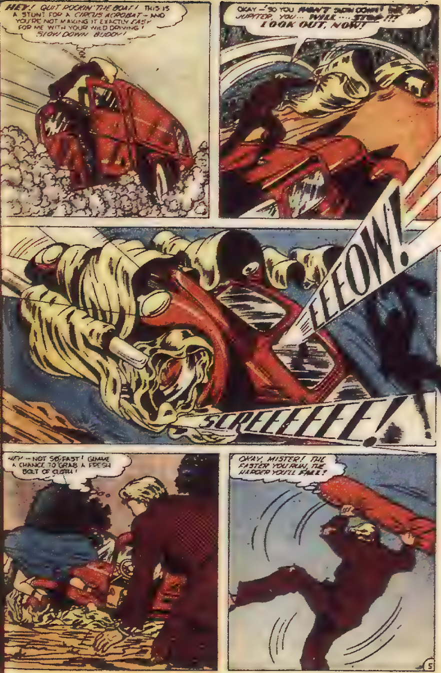
UNSEEN TERROR!
MARVEL BOY, WONDER OF THE AGES - SCOURGE OF EVIL - CHAMPION OF GOOD! FOLLOW HIM THROUGH A DAY OF MURDER, MAYHEM AND UNSEEN TERROR!!
EEE-AAACHH...
HELP!
AAARGHR!
WOW! THOSE GUYS ARE ALL CHOKING TO DEATH!
SCENE: A BUSY CITY STREET ONE SUMMER AFTERNOON.
EEEEEAAAGHR!
WHAT TH-???
JUMPIN' JUDAS! THE GUY'S DEAD!
LOOKS LIKE APOPLEXY-OR STRANGULATION!
SOMEBODY-GET A DOCTOR!
HEY-POLICE!

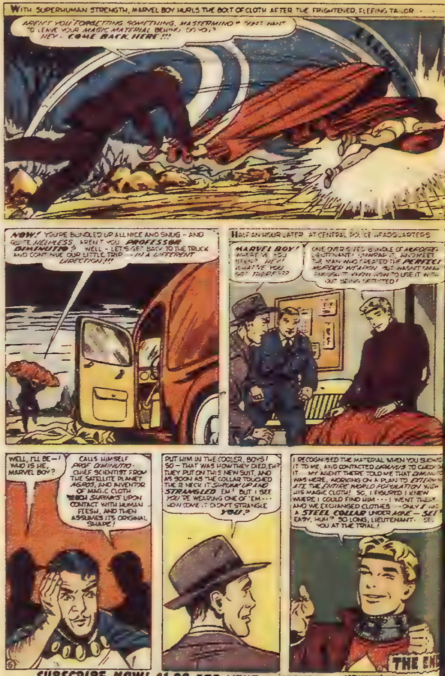


HEY! WHAT—?
AAAAAGGG

WELL, IT'S THE ONLY CONNECTING LINK BETWEEN THE FOUR MURDERS -- IF THEY ARE MURDERS -- THAT, AND THE FACT THAT THIS IS VERY UNUSUAL MATERIAL!
UNUSUAL? HERE -- LET ME LOOK AT IT AGAIN ... HEY!!! GREAT GUNS! YOU'RE NOT JUST KIDDING, LIEUTENANT!
WHY, THIS STUFF WASN'T EVEN MANUFACTURED IN THIS ....
PARDON ME, LIEUTENANT -- WE TRACED THAT CLOTHING TO AN OBSCURE LITTLE TAILOR'S SHOP OVER ON FIRST AVENUE ... BUT THE OWNER SEEMS TO HAVE SKIPPED TOWN!
OKAY -- CHECK ALL RAILROAD STATIONS AND AIRPORTS -- --
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, LIEUTENANT! LEAVE THIS TO ME! I'LL FIND HIM FOR YOU!
THIRTY MINUTES LATER AT HIS SKYPORT HEADQUARTERS
AN HOUR PASSED AND FINDS HIM AT A LONELY MOUNTAIN RETREAT
THIS SHOULD BE THE PLACE ... THE OLD ABANDONED ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY OF MAMMOUTH UNIVERSITY! SURE ENOUGH, THERE'S A LIGHT ...
YES? WHAT DO YOU WANT? HAVE NO TIME FOR ... YOU -- MARVEL BOY! WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE UNIVERSE ...?
SO -- YOU RECOGNIZE ME ... NOW MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO EXPLAIN TO ME JUST WHY YOU'RE HERE, AND WHY YOU'RE TAILORING SUITS OUT OF REDUCIBLE MATERIAL?
R-R-REDUCIBLE MATERIAL? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THE SUITS I MAKE ... MYSELF! THERE'S NOTHING REDUCIBLE ABOUT ... HERE ... IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME ... PROVE IT TO YOU ... ABOUT THE SAME SIZE ... SUPPOSE YOU TRY ON MY SUIT, AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!!!
HMMM! THAT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA
3

I'LL JUST WRAP YOUR CLOAK AROUND ME -- YOU SEE, MY SUIT FITS YOU PERFECTLY -- THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH IT, IS THERE, MARVEL BOY? WELL, WHY DON'T YOU BUTTON IT UP, MARVEL BOY???
I'M GOING TO -- I'M GOING TO! NO, THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING -- EXCEPT IT'S A LITTLE SNUG -- I CAN'T --
AAACH! IT'S SO TIGHT AROUND THE NECK!!! WH-WHA
EEEEEAAAAAA
HO, HO! SO THE "WONDER BOY OF THE UNIVERSE" FELL FOR MY SIMPLE LITTLE TRICK -- I'M SURPRISED AT YOU, MARVEL BOY!
BUT YOUR TROUBLES ARE OVER NOW, LITTLE GENIUS! AND SO ARE MINE! MY FIRST FOUR "CUSTOMERS" WERE JUST EXPERIMENTS -- BUT I'VE SHIPPED THOUSANDS OF BOLTS OF MY SPECIAL CLOTHING MATERIAL TO SUIT MANUFACTURERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, AND SOON WE'LL SEE SOME REAL ACTION!!! MEANWHILE...
I'LL ROLL YOU UP IN ONE OF THE BOLTS OF CLOTH -- WHICH IS AS GOOD A WAY AS I CAN THINK OF TO CONCEAL YOUR BODY! THEN I'LL LOAD YOU IN MY TRUCK WITH SOME MORE BOLTS OF CLOTH.
-- AND WE'LL RUN OUT TO THE SKYPORT, AND TAKE A LITTLE TRIP IN YOUR SPACE SHIP! I'M SURE YOU'D WANT TO MAKE YOUR FINAL JOURNEY INTO SPACE IN YOUR OWN PLANE! HO, HO! HA, HA!
BUT -- INSIDE THE SPEEDING TRUCK -
METHINKS YOU'VE PLAYED YOURSELF FOR A SUCKER, MISTER! JUST WAIT 'TIL I GET MY HANDS LOOSE -- NOW!
4


HEY! QUIT ROCKIN' THE BOAT! THIS IS A STUNT FOR A CIRCUS ACROBAT — AND YOU'RE NOT MAKING IT EXACTLY EASY FOR ME WITH YOUR WILD DRIVING! SLOW DOWN BUDDY!
OKAY — SO YOU WON'T SLOW DOWN! BY JUPITER, YOU... WILL ... STOP!!! LOOK OUT, NOW!
EEEOW!
SCREEEEEEE!
HEY — NOT SO FAST! GIMME A CHANCE TO GRAB A FRESH BOLT OF CLOTH!
OKAY, MISTER! THE FASTER YOU RUN, THE HARDER YOU'LL FALL!



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